

PRESS RELEASE



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CPEC Announces Regional Education and Demographic Profiles

March 17, 2003 — Sacramento — The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), a state panel that conducts independent, non-partisan policy analysis and provides recommendations on higher education to the Governor and Legislature, announced today the release of a first-of-kind Educational and Demographic Profile for legislative districts and regions throughout the state. “These profiles will aid policymakers in better understanding the significant variations that exist in the educational and economic well being of Californians,” said Robert L. Moore, Executive Director of the Commission. “The data highlight the fact that a broad brush, one-size-fits-all approach is out of sync with the regional diversity of the educational and economic challenges facing the people of California.”

The Profiles show huge variations in income and educational attainment from district to district and from region to region. Particularly noteworthy:

- Average household income in the wealthiest legislative district (\$131,100) is over four times that in the lowest income district (\$33,200).
- The percent of children living in poverty by district ranges from 4.8 percent to a staggering 43 percent.
- The percentage of the population with no college experience ranges by district from 8 percent to 66 percent.

“These profiles clearly show the strong correlation between income and educational attainment,” Moore said. “Comparing the map displaying *university-going rates* with the map depicting *median household income* leaves no doubt that districts with higher family incomes have higher percentages of high school graduates going on to our public universities.”

“There is no doubt that the States’ poorest areas have a host of barriers to educational advancement, said Alan Arkatov, the Commission’s Chairman. “In the absence of public policies and practices that better address these regional and socio-economic distinctions, wide differences in income and education will persist,” he said.

The Commission’s profiles also provide new insight regarding the increasing demand for education at California’s community colleges. Between 1996 and 2001, enrollment growth at the community colleges statewide was 29%, while the percentage of recent high school graduates enrolling in these colleges actually declined. Additionally, the increase in enrollment of Latinos in several regions was in excess of 50% and in the Los Angeles and South San Joaquin regions, Latino enrollment more than tripled. “These data demonstrate that the fastest growing ethnic group in California is taking advantage of the opportunity to attend college as envisioned in the 1960 Master Plan,” said Moore. “It also indicates that the torrid pace of enrollment growth in many community colleges is being fueled by students who are not just getting out of high school,” he said.

The Commission has posted each legislative district profile and regional comparisons on its website at www.cpec.ca.gov.